

Montgomery County Pennsylvania

Characteristics of the Population in New and Existing Housing Units



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Characteristics of the Population in New and Existing Housing Units in Montgomery County

Montgomery County gained 50,887 people between 2000 and 2010 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This was the third largest increase in the state, behind Chester and York Counties. The county grew by 6.8%, twice the rate of Pennsylvania. Even with the downturn in the economy and the housing market that took place in the middle of the last decade, new housing construction in this ten-year period remained a very visible part of the change in the county's landscape.



New housing construction was strong in the last decade despite the down economy.

Just over 28,000 units were built between 2000 and 2010, the most in the Philadelphia five-county region. As residents notice these local changes, the planning commission frequently gets inquiries on the effects – positive, negative, or otherwise – of newly built housing on the infrastructure and services provided by the county, its municipalities, and its school districts.

In order to have this local and up-to-date information available to the public, the Montgomery County Planning Commission examined the county's population living in new housing units constructed between 2000 and 2010. Staff used information from the county's Board of Assessment Appeals to identify census "blocks" in the 2010 Census that consist entirely of new construction of one housing type. These census blocks – either single-family detached (SFD), single-family attached (SFA, mostly townhouses and twins), or multifamily (MF) – could then be easily compared to each other for further analysis. In addition, staff has done a similar analysis on existing housing units, again using Census-designated blocks that consist of just one housing type. This report builds upon the research done for the previous report in this series that focused solely on new housing units and data from the 2000 Census.



Schoolchildren come from housing units of all types, but are most likely to come from single-family detached homes.

School Aged Children

Different housing types generate school children at very different rates. This is not a surprise, given that larger housing units with more bedrooms are more easily able to house more people. However, a frequent concern that the planning commission receives is about the outsized number of schoolchildren that are generated from new housing units.

Perceptions suggest that denser, multifamily housing brings in too many people – and too many schoolchildren – for the tax income that municipalities receive in return. A closer look at

this data shows the opposite. Although multifamily and attached housing units have become the majority of new housing units built in the county over the last few years, single-family detached housing is still a very popular housing choice for households with children under 18.

This is not to say that households with school aged children don't occupy apartments or townhomes, but the one thing that single-family detached homes offer more of – space – may be a big factor in home purchasing or renting decisions. Thus, single-family detached homes become the biggest burden on local school districts.

Of people living in new SFD units, there are approximately 0.93 students per household, a slight increase from the 0.83 students per household that was reported in the prior analysis. In comparison, there are about 0.21 students per household between the ages of 5 and 17 coming from single-family attached homes, and only 0.06 students per household coming from multifamily homes. Households residing in existing units contribute 0.55 school aged children per single-family detached unit – fewer than from new units, but still more than households residing in attached and multifamily units. Much of the decline in the number of school aged children coming from existing housing units may be due to empty nesters living in these homes.

Table One: School Aged Children in New and Existing Housing Units (2010)

	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached	Multifamily
School Aged Children per Household in New Units	0.93	0.21	0.06
School Aged Children per Household in Existing Units	0.55	0.41	0.18

School Aged Children per Household takes into account that not all units may have been occupied at the time of the 2010 Census.



School districts should work in cooperation with local municipalities to best plan for future needs.

What does this mean for school districts? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer for school districts that have to stretch their resources to accept new students. New construction allows school districts to receive additional tax income. At the same time, attempts to slow residential growth through local legislation may only force this growth elsewhere, possibly even within the same school district.

School administrators should be aware of demographic trends, especially when forecasting the number of students per

grade, so as to best plan for facilities and staffing needs. School districts should also work cooperatively with municipal governments to push for the right mix of uses in a community, to both have the right amount of school aged children and create an optimal level of funding through local tax revenue. Municipalities should make every effort to plan for a healthy mix of housing types and sizes, to allow for reasonable growth while accommodating for the needs of the varying housing needs of the people who call Montgomery County home.

Age of New Residents

By far, the largest percent share of residents in these new housing units is people between the ages of 25 and 44, and to some extent, their children. While older people make up a significant part of Montgomery County's population, they are more likely settled in an area and may not necessarily shop for newly constructed homes. Younger people make up a big percentage of the residents in new multifamily units. As for existing housing units, it seems as if the ages of the residents skew upward. That being said, it seems reasonable to assume that newer housing units may be attracting younger families and households and existing housing units are home to more well-established families and households.

Table Two: Ages of Residents in New Housing Units (2010)

New Units	Total Number of People	Percent	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multifamily	
			Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied
Total	15,039*	--	8,490	--	3,837	--	2,712	--
Under Age 5	1,447	9.62%	974	11.47%	336	8.76%	137	5.05%
Ages 5-17	2,705	17.99%	2,239	26.37%	363	9.46%	103	3.80%
Ages 18-24	631	4.20%	303	3.57%	146	3.81%	182	6.71%
Ages 25-34	2,669	17.75%	774	9.12%	776	20.22%	1,119	41.26%
Ages 35-44	2,962	19.70%	1,988	23.42%	544	14.18%	430	15.86%
Ages 45-54	1,790	11.90%	1,109	13.06%	418	10.89%	263	9.70%
Ages 55-64	1,363	9.06%	572	6.74%	570	14.86%	221	8.15%
Ages 65 and over	1,475	9.81%	534	6.29%	684	17.83%	257	9.48%

Table Three: Ages of Residents in Existing Housing Units (2010)

Existing Units	Total Number of People	Percent	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multifamily	
			Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied
Total	268,208*	--	219,412	--	27,706	--	21,090	--
Under Age 5	15,410	5.75%	12,082	5.51%	2,039	7.36%	1,289	6.11%
Ages 5-17	49,207	18.35%	42,548	19.39%	4,535	16.37%	2,124	10.07%
Ages 18-24	18,734	6.98%	14,262	6.50%	2,048	7.39%	2,424	11.49%
Ages 25-34	26,655	9.94%	17,144	7.81%	4,587	16.56%	4,924	23.35%
Ages 35-44	35,891	13.38%	28,937	13.19%	4,355	15.72%	2,599	12.32%
Ages 45-54	46,130	17.20%	39,871	18.17%	4,077	14.72%	2,182	10.35%
Ages 55-64	37,348	13.93%	32,279	14.71%	3,204	11.56%	1,865	8.84%
Ages 65 and over	38,980	14.53%	32,436	14.78%	2,861	10.33%	3,683	17.46%

* These "total" population numbers are the totals found in these subsets of housing units studied. Montgomery County had a total of 799,874 residents as of the 2010 Census. The above totals capture 21% (SFD), 26% (SFA) and 48% (MF) of new housing units and 47% (SFD), 20% (SFA), and 18% (MF) of existing housing units.

Household Composition

Categorizing the population as family or nonfamily households is a slightly different way of looking at the county's population. Families, according to the Census Bureau, are defined as a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. Nonfamily households consist of people living alone or with people to whom they are not related. When broken down by housing type, similar patterns emerge. Ninety-three percent of the population in new SFD units consists of family households. And of all new SFD households, 64% consist of family households with children. The majority of the population in new SFA homes – 66%– consists of family

households. Twenty four percent of all the new SFA households are families with at least one child under the age of 18, and 28 percent of all SFA households are people living alone. Nonfamilies live in sixty four percent of all MF households. Just over 50 percent of MF households consist of householders living alone.

As the nation's baby boomers start to turn 65, the number of households with a resident over the age of 65 has increased dramatically. In 2000, only 10% of the new attached units studied fell into this category but the 2010 data shows a jump to nearly 27%. Similarly, in 2000, only 7% (each) of new detached and multifamily units had a household with a member over the age of 65; this increased in 2010, respectively, to 15% and 12%.

Table Four: Household Composition in New Units (2010)

New Units	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multifamily	
Households	Number	Percent of Those Studied	Number	Percent of Those Studied	Number	Percent of Those Studied
Total Households	2,415	--	1,730	--	1,624	--
Family Households	2,243	92.88%	1,134	65.55%	579	35.65%
Nonfamily Households	172	7.12%	596	34.45%	1,045	64.35%
Family Households with Children Under 18	1,546	64.02%	411	23.76%	178	10.96%
Married Couples with Children Under 18	1,460	60.46%	312	18.03%	126	7.76%
Married Couples without Children	642	26.58%	652	37.69%	338	20.81%
Householder Living Alone	135	5.59%	482	27.86%	814	50.12%
Household with One or More People Over 65	372	15.40%	467	26.99%	193	11.88%
Average Household Size	3.51		2.22		1.67	

Table Five: Household Composition in Existing Units (2010)

Existing Units	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multifamily	
Households	Number	Percent of Those Studied	Number	Percent of Those Studied	Number	Percent of Those Studied
Total Households	77,065	--	10,945	--	11,573	--
Family Households	62,981	81.72%	7,240	66.15%	4,705	40.65%
Nonfamily Households	14,150	18.36%	3,705	33.85%	6,868	59.35%
Family Households with Children Under 18	27,643	35.87%	3,392	30.99%	2,092	18.08%
Married Couples with Children Under 18	24,460	31.74%	2,356	21.53%	964	8.33%
Married Couples without Children	30,571	39.67%	2,855	26.08%	1,862	16.09%
Householder Living Alone	11,723	15.21%	2,976	27.19%	5,622	48.58%
Household with One or More People Over 65	22,238	28.86%	2,164	19.77%	2,946	25.46%
Average Household Size	2.85		2.53		1.82	

Conclusion

Single-family detached homes, regardless of whether or not they are newly constructed, have the largest impact on local school districts in terms of the numbers of children generated. However, this analysis has shown that all types of housing have some effect on schools. SFD units generate more students per unit than other housing types, and more in total since SFD units comprise the largest portion of housing units in the county. As is probably expected, single-family detached homes draw in large numbers of both families and married couples with children, while multifamily units attract large numbers of single people. Regardless, different types of families have varying housing needs and preferences – and local governments should continue to encourage a variety of housing types to adequately provide for new and existing residents.

Notes

For new housing units, the number of census blocks surveyed is 194 blocks for single-family detached units, 71 blocks for single-family attached units and 18 blocks for multifamily units. This comes to, respectively, 21%, 26%, and 48% of new housing units built between 2000 and 2010.

For existing housing units, the number of census blocks surveyed is 4,330 blocks for single-family detached units, 395 blocks for single-family attached units and 90 blocks for multifamily units. This comes to, respectively, 47%, 20%, and 18% of existing housing units built prior to 2000.

The number of households and the number of units differ because "households" is equivalent to the number of occupied units at the time of the Census.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Data

2010 Characteristics of the Population in New Housing Units
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multifamily	
Number of New Units	2,513 (studied out of 11,940 new units)		1,891 (studied out of (7,367 new units)		2,527 (studied out of 5,276 new units)	
PEOPLE	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied
	8,490	--	3,837	--	2,712	--
Under Age 5	974	11.47%	336	8.76%	137	5.05%
Ages 5-17	2,239	26.37%	363	9.46%	103	3.80%
Ages 18-24	303	3.57%	146	3.81%	182	6.71%
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Ages 45-54	1,109	13.06%	418	10.89%	263	9.70%
Ages 55-64	572	6.74%	570	14.86%	221	8.15%
Ages 65+	534	6.29%	684	17.83%	257	9.48%

HOUSEHOLDS	Number	Percent of Those Studied	Number	Percent of Those Studied	Number	Percent of Those Studied
Households Studied	2,415	--	1,730	--	1,624	--
Family Households	2,243	92.88%	1,134	65.55%	579	35.65%
Nonfamily Households	172	7.12%	596	34.45%	1,045	64.35%
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Household with One or More People Over 65	372	15.40%	467	26.99%	193	11.88%
Average Household Size	3.51		2.22		1.67	

SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached	Multifamily
School Aged Children per Household	0.93	0.21	0.06
School Aged Children per Unit	0.89	0.19	0.04

Notes:

Montgomery County is a growing area – and the Montgomery County Planning Commission frequently gets inquiries on the effects of new housing on the county, its municipalities, and its school districts. As multifamily and attached unit construction gains in popularity for its affordability and smaller footprint, common perceptions sometimes interfere with the development process. Although many people suggest that new denser housing brings in too many people – and too many schoolchildren – it is in fact just the opposite. Single-family detached units contribute the bulk of new schoolchildren in the county. Planning Commission staff used information from the County's Board of Assessments to identify census "blocks" in the 2010 Census that consisted entirely of new construction of one housing type to determine who was living in which type of housing.

Number of census blocks surveyed for each housing type is 194 blocks (SFD), 71 blocks (SFA) and 18 blocks (MF). This comes to, respectively, 21%, 26%, and 48% of new housing units built between 2000 and 2010.

The number of households and the number of units differ because "households" is equivalent to the number of occupied units at the time of the Census.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Data

2010 Characteristics of the Population in Existing Housing Units
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multifamily	
Number of Units	78,878 (studied out of 166,543 units)		11,355 (studied out of 55,745 units)		12,887 (studied out of 72,428 units)	
PEOPLE	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied	Number of People	Percent of Those Studied
	219,412	--	27,706	--	21,090	--
Under Age 5	12,082	5.51%	2,039	7.36%	1,289	6.11%
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Average Household Size	2.85		2.53		1.82	

SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached	Multifamily
School Aged Children per Household	0.55	0.41	0.18
School Aged Children per Unit	0.54	0.40	0.16

Notes:

Montgomery County is a growing area – and the Montgomery County Planning Commission frequently gets inquiries on the effects of new housing on the county, its municipalities, and its school districts. As multifamily and attached unit construction gains in popularity for its affordability and smaller footprint, common perceptions sometimes interfere with the development process. Although many people suggest that denser housing brings in too many people – and too many schoolchildren – it is in fact just the opposite. Single-family detached units contribute the bulk of new schoolchildren in the county. Planning Commission staff used information from the County's Board of Assessments to identify census "blocks" in the 2010 Census that consisted entirely of new construction of one housing type to determine who was living in which type of housing.

Number of census blocks surveyed for each housing type is 4330 blocks (SFD), 395 blocks (SFA) and 90 blocks (MF). This comes to, respectively, 47%, 20%, and 18% of existing housing units built prior to 2000.

The number of households and the number of units differ because "households" is equivalent to the number of occupied units at the time of the Census.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Data